(iii) M/s. Contact systems (1) Pvt. Ltd.

(iv) M/s. Idea Cellular Ltd.

(v) M/s. ESSAR Telecom Ltd.

(vi) M/s. AIRCELL Digilink India Ltd.

(vii) M/s. MAX India Ltd.

(c) to (e) Do not arise in view of (a) & (b) above.

(f) Presently 25 companies, including Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited and Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), have been granted 78 licences to provide CMTS in 23 Service Areas covering whole of the country. As per the terms and conditions of the Licence for CMTS, in the Metro City Service Areas an operator is required to cover 90% of the Service Area within one year and in the Telecom Circle Service Areas 10% of the District Headquarters within one year and 50% of the District Headquarters within three years. The Licensee is also permitted to cover any other town in a district in lieu of the District Headquarter. The choice of District Headquarters/Towns to be covered and further expansion beyond 50% District Headquarters/Towns shall lie with the Licensee depending on his business decision. There is no mandatory requirement for coverage of 100% of the Districts. However, the Government operator, namely BSNL who have been granted CMTS Licences for all Service Areas of the country, except for Delhi and Mumbai Metro City Service Areas, envisages to cover all the District Headquarters in its licensed service areas.

Software policy

3588. SHRI S. M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that NGOs have demanded an immediate meeting to resolve Government's policy favouring a particular kind of expensive and monopolistic software;

(b) if so, when such a meeting would be held;

(c) whether Government would explain the policy to reduce the vast gap coming up between the rich users of computers and the poor people;

(d) whether any specific suggestions have been received from NGOs and social activists in this regard; and

(e) the steps proposed to give a proper and patient hearing to the less privileged sections of society who want cheaper software?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) to (e) Yes, Sir. A meeting is being convened shortly to discuss these issues. Government as a matter of policy does not favour any particular kind of expensive and monopolistic software. Government generally follows a technology neutral policy.

Recovery of dues from International Maritime Satellite Organisation

3589. SHRI MURLI DEORA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited failed to recover its dues from the International Maritime Satellite Organisation during the last three years;

(b) if so, the amount involved and the reasons for not effecting the recovery; and

(c) whether any accountability was fixed for it and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) VSNL has informed that there are no pending dues from International Maritime Satellite Organization.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

Transfer of BSNL employees in Andhra Pradesh

3590. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that BSNL has resorted to frequent transfers in some districts of Andhra Pradesh;